

An analysis of coca cola friendly twist commercial critical thinkings example

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People watch TV, listen to the news, and learn something new on a daily basis, and many of them are influenced by advertising. Nowadays, an ad can be seen everywhere: on television, online, on the street, in social networks and wherever it can be put. There are different types of advertising, and each type has a different impact on different people. It has a significant influence on people's thoughts, actions, and feelings, making advertising a very powerful tool of emotional and psychological appeal. Advertising, which informs us about products and/or services, becomes an integral part of our culture, thus largely contributing to our way of life. The level of influence of advertising on such aspects of life is determined by the particular society in question; hence it is necessary to take into consideration the values of society and the people's way of life. In this paper, one of the most recent Coca Cola ads is analyzed in terms of its marketing strategy and appeal, as well as its impact on its target audiences.

Coca Cola is one of the leading global companies and its main marketing strategy is advertising. Coca Cola puts a great deal of efforts into its marketing strategies, and it has accomplished it quite successfully for years. This remarkable success is shown by how people keep on talking about the product and sharing the company's great ideas. Coca Cola's strong appeal to the people can be attributed to its brand ideal, which is sharing the moment of happiness. Recently, Coca Cola has come up with many interesting and innovative advertisements. However, for this paper, I would like to focus on the advertising of Coca Cola- Friendly Twist. This advertisement aims to help freshmen break the ice by encouraging them to meet someone else for a common purpose: twisting their Coke's tightly sealed bottle cap.

The targeted audiences are college students and people who want to make new friends and socialize personally. In this advertisement, Coca Cola's marketing expertise demonstrates how they have cleverly targeted college students by using their product to create new friendships, and to help students communicate and interact with fellow peers. According to the Coca Cola advertisement, freshman years are the loneliest hence the advertisement is performed within the college premises. The advertisement starts off with scenes of freshmen sitting alone, observing their surroundings, and being indifferent to their fellow students. And then a text appears on the screen in red and white saying, " it's the first day of college, a day when talks and interactions are reduced to zero. So we thought of something special to make freshmen bond" (Coca Cola, Coca-Cola Friendly Twist). Afterward, they show a red painted fridge that is filled with not just ordinary bottles of Coke, but Coca Cola bottles with caps that are impossible to open by a single person. Instead, one's bottle cap should be matched with another person's bottle cap, interlocking the two, and then twisting them simultaneously for it to open.

In an opening scene, a student walks up to the Coca Cola fridge and takes a Coke bottle. She tries opening it but the cap would not budge even a bit. The bottle caps are sealed too tightly, so tight that it won't twist. Such is the ingenuity of this Coca Cola campaign— the desire to drink a Coke is matched with the need to make new friends and socialize. A Coke bottle cap will not twist and come off until it finds its match. Later on, students began approaching other students to ask for help in opening their Coke. While trying to open their Coke bottles, students began interacting with one

another. Eventually the ad shows students actively working together and intermingling with one another.

In this ad, the twist caps that can only be opened by another bottle highlight the happiness and sharing message of Coca-Cola. It will not only bring people together in happiness, but will leave a lasting impression in the minds of those who experience it; and, others will surely see the efforts the brand has went through to keep their customers' loyalty. Students will make friends on their first day of college, which, in turn, would endow them with memorable experiences in college. The targeted audiences are clearly students. This ad helps students make new friends and communicate with their fellow peers.

After choosing the targeted audience, the advertisers' next step is to identify what emotional appeals they can give to their audiences. Jib Fowles, an author who used the findings of Henry A. Murray, tells us about the 15 appeal groups that advertisers try to employ when making the commercials and other advertisements we see every day. From the analysis of Fowles's 'fifteen basic appeals', it is identified that some of these could be attributed to the Coca Cola Friendly Twist ad. According to Henry Murray, the need for affiliation consists of "24 desires 'to draw near and enjoyably cooperate or reciprocate with another; to please and win affection of another; to adhere and remain loyal to a friend.' The manifestations of this motive can be segmented into several different types of affiliation, beginning with romance" (Fowles para 21). These techniques can be clearly targeted or at times a mere glimpse into the deep-seated desires a person may have. The Coca Cola Friendly Twist falls under two of the categories: the need for

affiliation and the need to feel safe. Taking a cursory look at each of these two will help explain how the Coca Cola commercial fits into these two categories.

The first appeal used in the Coca Cola Friendly Twist commercial is the need for affiliation, which is described by Fowles (1998) in the following way: “ In any case, the need to associate with others is widely invoked in advertising and is probably the most prevalent appeal. All sorts of goods and services are sold by linking them to our unfulfilled desires to be in good company” (para 19). The Coca Cola commercial demonstrates this need by suggesting that those who really desire something, like drinking Coke, should seek help or companionship from others to make the achievement of such desires faster, easier, and happier. This gives one a better chance to interact with others and make new friends.

Through the ad, someone who longs to socialize and make new friends will believe that buying a Coke bottle will help them achieve such favored interaction and companionship. For instance, on the first day of college, most students are worried about making new friends. Most of the time, all they want is to find someone they can strongly associate with throughout college. Thus Coca Cola helps students build new friendships, which is one of the target audiences' innermost desires. By finding someone to help them open their bottle caps, they are given the opportunity to find new friends who will stick around for good. The commercial shows how the students became more sociable, taking pictures and communicating with each other after successfully opening their bottle caps.

Another longing that the Coca Cola commercial is trying to address is the

need to feel safe. Fowles (1998) argues that “ nobody in their right mind wants to be intimidated, menaced, battered, poisoned” (para 60). The Coke ad conveys this kind of ‘ safety’ to its audiences by creating a comfort zone of friendship and positive emotions. Usually people think that the need for safety applies only to physical safety; but there is a more important aspect encompassed by this need—psychological safety. Through this advertisement, Coca Cola created a psychological safety among many college students or the younger generation. In the commercial, they show college students lonely, isolated, and unconcerned about their surroundings on their first day of college. Some students are nervous. It is evident from the ad that the biggest worry of freshman students is making new friends. Coke gives them the opportunity to find new friends and socialize with other students who are also yearning for interaction. After watching this commercial, students may feel confident taking the initiative to communicate with their fellow peers.

Moreover, there are groups of people who watched the advertising and had some special feelings about its message. In order to confirm this, I asked a few students who are in their freshmen year. One of the freshman students I interviewed, Annie, openly expressed her opinion of the Coca Cola’s Friendly Twist advertisement:

Before watching this commercial, I was scared and nervous to go to college. Now I am not nervous because I am sure I will find new friends. Coke came up with different and interesting campaigns but Friendly Twist is my favorite commercial as the targeted audiences students and young generation. Also, I am sure students will inspire and socialize after watching this commercial.

This Coca Cola ad has inspired many students to communicate with their fellow peers. It has successfully reached its targeted audience. This was substantiated by Global Packaging Analyst, Viktorija Gnatoka (Intel News para 5):

The new friendly twist cap introduced by Coca Cola is not overly novel in the world of interactive packaging. In this case Coca Cola builds on their previous sharable can campaign that splits in half. The whole idea is to get people do things together engaging with the brand and the product. This always receives positive feedback in the age of social media, when in-person communication is increasingly rare.

She thinks Coca Cola's packaging has helped them engage with their customers, and Coca Cola was successful in doing it. She also said that this ad made Coca Cola more memorable among their audiences.

Similarly, Lynn Dornblaser, Director of Innovation and Insight claimed, "Coca-Cola's Friendly Twist video continues the long tradition Coca-Cola has of connecting drinking its carbonated soft drinks with having fun and connecting with others" (Intel News para 8). She also said that Friendly Twist commercial is different from other commercials because it appears to be an actual product packaging and not simply a promotional campaign. Many people expressed their opinion about the Coca Cola Friendly Twist commercial on social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter. Most of these commenters are students. Many of them expressed how happy and excited they are about their first day in college after seeing the commercial. Erika, another college student I interviewed, admitted that she is not excited to make new friends, but she also believes that Coca Cola gives students a

new platform to make new friends and socialize. She believes that through this advertisement students are encouraged to build new relationships and, at the same time, to buy Coke. She also thinks that Coca Cola is successful in reaching their targeted audience.

Overall, it is apparent that Coca-Cola tried to do something for the students and the people who want to make new friends, and is in fact successful in doing it. The twist caps that can only be opened by another bottle highlight the happiness and sharing message of Coca Cola. It helped many students make new friends on their first day of college. This campaign was a success, as expected, since its target audiences enjoyed it and were persuaded to buy Coke. Through this commercial, Coca Cola created lasting impression on its audiences. This will surely be another boost to the company's continuing success.

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